



State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South • PO Box 94987 • Lincoln, NE 68509

Country Inn & Suites
5353 North 27th
Lincoln, NE
August 15, 2006
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Present: *Debra Bauer, Kim Boyce, Eileen Curry, Don Crouch, Linda Douglas, Alvin Fox, Gayle Hahn, Sandy Ham, Marc Hultine, David Jelinek, Jason Kerkman, Les Kimmons, Frank Lloyd, Mike Newman, Kipp Ransom, Vicki Rasmussen, and Pearl Van Zandt, Merwyn Vavrina, Terry Lee Wilson*

Absent: *Sharon Bloechle, Susan Rocker. Marc Schultz*

Minutes by *Cheryle Adams*

Gayle Hahn called the meeting to order

Gayle introduced Debra Bauer, Larry Niemeyer and Terry Lee Wilson

I Public Comment: None

II. Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Les Kimmons to approve the agenda . Linda Douglas seconded the motion. The motion carried, agenda approved.

III. Approval of Minutes from April 11, 2006

Motion made by Eileen Curry to approve the April 11th minutes. Alvn Fox seconded the motion. Motion carried, agenda approved.

IV. Old Business

A. None

V. New Business

A. Meeting Dates for Next Year (*Don Crouch*)

Motion made by Merwyn to have another meeting. Proposed was to have the meeting June 12th. Vicki seconded the motion. Motion carried, to have a meeting in June. Location to be determined.

Change made to current proposal of dates.
Change October 24th to October 10th, location TBD
Change December 12th to December 5th, location TBD

Merwin made a motion to approve the new meeting dates. Linda seconded the motion. Motion carried, the new meeting dates are approved.

B. Election of Officers (*Don Crouch*)

Alvin motioned to accept the chairs as they are. Marc seconded the motion. Motion carried to accept the current committee chairs.

C. Presentation of Certificates (Frank Lloyd)

Frank presented certificates to Dave Jelinek and Eileen Curry for their service on the Council. Frank stated that there is a rich diversity of backgrounds of members that help make the Nebraska Council strong

Dave will be working with the Kearney and Grand Island staff, providing training support for new staff and for experienced staff.

VI. Reports

A. CAP Report (*Vicki Rasmussen*)

Vicki gave an overview of the CAP report. She added if there were any changes that came about due to a CAP complaint the change would be made according to policy/procedure. That would be included in the CAP report.

B. SILC Report (*Alvin Fox*)

The Nebraska Secretary of State Office has provided SILC with \$17,000 to host two voting conferences in September. They will be held on 9/13 in North Platte at the Holiday Inn Express and 9/29 in Lincoln at the Holiday Inn Downtown. We are forming a new coalition, NE Disability Vote Project (NDVP). It is small but is currently seeking additional members. The NDVP is creating a database to aid in mobilization efforts. They want names, addresses and email addresses of people interested in disability issues. This information is only for voting efforts and will not be shared, sold, or given to another group. The NDVP is only interested in non-partisan voting issues since 25% of the voting age population is people with disabilities.

C. ATP Report

The ATP database has been implemented with very good results. They are looking at expanding the website. ATP introduced a new website for equipment that can be loaned or purchased by individuals for assistive technology.

Mark in the process of hiring staff to work part time to assess ATP needs for students in transition. They will be going out with VR staff to look at the need.

ATP is working closely with VR to standardize the process of how ATP and VR works together. Who will pay for what items/equipment. There is a yearly contract with ATP by VR to provide staff services. ATP then goes out to the consumer to assess and make

any recommendations. IF they need ATP, they will look for funding and VR is one of the agencies that have funding. Nebraska ATP has one of the premier programs in the country.

D. Committee Reports

1. Client Services Committee (*Les Kimmons*)

The committee is focusing on what kind of client survey to do for the Personal Employment Booklet. They are pleased it was cut down to 44 pages. The issue is its effectiveness. Don and Vicki are working on questions for the survey to determine the how it is working. They will make a few adjustments on the questions and will also do a pilot program to see how it is doing. How effective are we in working with people and VR's consistency. Are they consistent in determining a job goal, try to figure out how to be consistent in greater Nebraska as well as the eastern part of the state. We are looking at using our receptionist to do the calling on the survey. This would be a more immediate way of determining the effectiveness, having an immediate response.

The booklet was distributed in January and it takes from one day to a month to be completed. Will survey those people who have currently completed the IPE booklet within that month.

This will evaluate the effectiveness of developing a job goal as a result of this. Did the consumer have one when then came to VR, or did the booklet help develop this. Will start the surveying process September 1, calling those consumers who completed the booklet in August.

2. Employer Services Committee (*Eileen Curry*)

The committee is working to incorporate employee relations with the transition project. Sandy will share some of the new products that have been developed with the council later.

Jim updated the committee on advances in job outreach. They are taking a look at the national advances that have been made. How can we use this information in Nebraska? How will this work with transition students. The committee will analyze the computer data from last year and review the national employer database. This is where an employer can be researched on the website and nationally that has been approved. Future job trends—banks, computer and hospitality. They are looking at different approaches—branching out into different areas, elder workers, people hurt on the job, repetitive injuries.

3. Transition Services Committee (*Linda Douglas*)

Terry Wilson and Larry Niemeyer will be joining this group. Jack shared packet "BOOKLET RESOURCES FOR THE TRANSITION EDUCATOR". This is really outstanding for transition. They will go out to all the schools and be used with the transition students. This will help establish goals for learning, earning and living. Based on those three categories will look at their IEP at grade 7.

The committee is discussing creating a survey to determine the usefulness of VR services to the school. Looking at inviting people from the schools to participate on this committee. Two staff members have been invited to attend this afternoon. They will give the committee an update on the effectiveness of VR transition in the schools.

VII. Director's Report (*Frank Lloyd*)

TRANSITION SERVICES In preparation for the new school year, 2006-07, we developed a new publication: Arranging Transition Services with Vocational Rehabilitation — A Guide for Educators. This publication along with the new Transition Services pamphlet, the current Transition Services Planner: A Guide for Students and Their Families, and several other pieces of information were distributed to VR staff who provide transition services to 325 high schools statewide. Our staff will share these materials with educators in the new school year workshops and planning sessions. These materials along with local planning with educators will help assure stronger transition partnerships.

CAREER PLANNING — TRAINING VIDEO A training video was developed to assist new staff in learning how to conduct the “Employment Discussion” (the initial meeting with consumer) and the Job Planning Discussion (a sequence of one or more planning sessions with the consumer to develop the IPE). Kelli Funk, VR’s new multi-media specialist, worked with Janet Drudik, Don Crouch and selected staff to develop the video. Staff played the counselor and consumer roles. Actual consumers were not included in the video. The video along with other training materials will be used to train new staff. Part of the video will be shown to the Council at their next meeting so they can ask questions and get an idea of how we plan to develop other new staff training materials.

CONSUMER SERVICE PAMPHLETS A series of six customer service pamphlets are being developed to market VR staff services to consumers. The first three pamphlets (in draft form) were distributed to Council members later in the meeting by Sandy Ham. If Council members have comments or editing suggestions, send them to Sandy and they will be considered for the final draft. The pamphlets are not designed to describe the services in detail. But, rather, to provide an overview for the consumer and a list of the benefits of the services as well as what they should expect from VR staff providing the service.

LINCOLN OFFICE MOVE The office move is still in the planning stages. Mark Schultz and others have provided information about space requirement, functionality and general design of the office. ATP and VR will share common space such as conference rooms, interview rooms, etc. but will have their separate, easily identifiable space as well. The space will use an open design concept similar to the Grand Island VR office. There will be consumers’ work areas for career planning and job placement. ATP will have demonstration and resource areas. Spring of 2007 is the earliest we envision the office being ready. The bidding process will start in the next few weeks. Construction or reconstruction will be necessary and might take about four months.

MADONNA PARTNERSHIP VR is making plans to focus more on consumers who experience a physical disability. Each of the VR offices are looking for opportunities to expand services to this population. Madonna has agreed to provide more detailed disability training than they are able to provide in the brief medical aspects training than they currently provide to VR staff. Kip Ransom, former VR counselor, now working at Madonna will be assisting in this project. The Council will be given a project update and more details about VR's work in this area at the next Council meeting.

RSA VISIT VR is meeting with two representatives from the Rehabilitation Services Administration this week. This is not a monitoring visit — just an opportunity for RSA to become acquainted with the Nebraska program. VR provided information about all aspects of their program including working in teams, direct staff services, service delivery process (i.e., Employment Discussion, IPE Booklet, placement services) partnerships, connections with key stakeholders, the Employment Warranty Program, etc.

VIII. Council-Federal Representative Exchange (*Don Crouch*)

80% of VR's funding comes from the federal government, per the Rehabilitation Act. In past few months our federal partner has raised some issues about how Nebraska VR is operating.

The regional offices were closed last fall. Everything is now going through the federal office in DC. They are looking strictly at the law, either we are complying or we are not. VR met with them yesterday. One issue they brought up is causing problems with almost every state. We are required to have a cooperative agreement with post secondary institutions outlining how we will work together and provide services to VR clients that are students. This is extremely difficult to meet. There are issues concerning accommodation, interpreters; etc. Who is responsible for paying for those services? Nebraska VR sent letters to the postsecondary schools several years ago about how it should work. Classroom instruction is their responsibility under ADA guidelines and this includes interpreter services. VR would provide any accommodation types of things outside of the classroom, like a tutor. The schools basically accepted that, but we only heard back from UNL. VR has operated under this. Feds have told us that the letter is not an official agreement. They want a formal agreement. Problem is how to get school to sign agreement. Schools typically don't want to do that, when it really isn't clear under the law. Nebraska VR isn't aware of any clients not being served by the schools.

The second issue major issue is order of selection. Severe disabilities are the first served. States are allowed to determine the order of selection. Taken in consideration is the time it takes to rehabilitate someone, functional limitations, or number of services person might needs. Base around any of those, specifically says "how it relates to work. Nebraska VR has tied the order of selection to functional limitations as it affects work.

We are now being told that this isn't acceptable. Our attorney has been in contact with them. They are saying we have to base it on number of services or specifically on number of limitations.

We are working on a new draft how we will proceed with the order of selection based on counting number of functional limitations.

The problem is that order of selection guidelines will need to be changed in Rule 72. This is quite an undertaking to change the Rule. It will take up to a year to get the Rule changed and because of state law, we can't change our process till we change the rule. The Fed's want to see the draft and they will allow us the time to get changed in the Rule.

VR prepares a State Plan each year that is submitted and approved. These things have been approved in the plan for years, and now they aren't acceptable.

The Council will have an opportunity to meet with the federal people and ask questions.

IX. Introduction of the Federal Representative (*Don Crouch*) 12:00

Sue Rankin-White is part of a five member team with RSA. She provides technical support assistance. To provide a broad base of support to the state agencies and have the depth and experience to do that through a team approach. She is here to visit with key partners and stakeholders that are key players in the rehabilitation process. Her role in the unit is to develop a database of partnerships and stakeholders. They strongly recognize the SRC as a key partner to VR. SRC's role in this whole process is valuable.

She discussed their 2004 development of a national curriculum for training rehabilitation councils. It was implemented in 2005 and was distributed to every region in the country allowing rehab councils view it.

The new role, will take this a step further. Working with rehabilitation councils making the curriculum available on CD and created a self-paced online tutorial. This will take the existing curriculum adding some of the state plan components. This will help facilitate orientation for the new members coming on board. They will be able to access the online tutorial anywhere.. After the program is developed, it will be tested in a couple of regions, then tested nationally throughout the country within the next year. There will be a pretest and a posttest. Members will be tested on their knowledge before and then tested again after they have completed the training.

Part of the initiative is the opportunity to convene by way of video conferencing some national groups. To work smarter and work with the limited resources that they have. They hope to provide more expertise in more capacity than before. To provide the same message consistently across the country.

James Sirmans formally worked as a CAP Director in Oklahoma. His official function is state liaison, to be a single point of contact for questions about rehabilitation services. If there are questions concerning policy, contact him and he will direct them to the appropriate person.

James stated, they are not here on official review. They are here to just visit and learn more about Nebraska VR.

Next year they will move into the monitoring phase. They plan on bringing in various members of the team. This will have more of an individualized approach. This activity will be carried out as a desk function. They are working on how the 107 report will be presented to VR. This will be a national template of information, delivered to VR starting in October and finishing by the end of October. It will have information about the fiscal accountabilities, timeliness of reports, etc.

As far as onsite monitoring, this will be crafted in each state with the agency, making it individualized. Monitoring will be tailored/individualized specific to the VR agency, will be monitored on a three-year cycle

X. Transition Report/Update (*Jack Shepard/School Personnel*)

The transition committee started working with Jack Shepard nine months on transition issues. 90% of Jack's time is transition with 10% being Special Education. Jack stated that they have hired a number of staff who will work specifically with the schools in the area of transition. That is an important move for transition. This will help the schools realize that transition is important and for them to recognize this is a statewide program.

Brenda McNiff Transition Coordinator from ESU 5 and Sherry Jenson a Special Education teacher with Waverly High school are working with the staff from the Lincoln Office in the area of transition. Publications have been developed in the area of transition and will be distributed. Sandy was instrumental in this and will provide the update.

VR will be working with students 14-15, in cooperation with the schools. Most activities are group activities. The primary benefit is that the students their families get to know about VR and our role. This gives an opportunity to build relationships and to help them understand that VR is an employment program. This will help them to develop a plan that will eventually provide long-term employment.

Students will be introduced to VR in their freshman year. VR representatives will attend school open house so they can discuss with parents the services that are offered. Representatives from VR will attend the IEP meetings. Students will be able to sign up for services in their sophomore year. VR will do assessment of students. The assessment can be done in the VR office or at the school. The program expanded last year to have more students than those that are getting the work experience.

Sherry discussed the supported employment pilot project. The need ongoing support to help them continue employment; i.e., job coach, etc. Developmental disability services is an ongoing system that provides the long-term support. Kids are in school to age 21 when they could be out in the community working at a competitive wage but unable to because the funding mechanisms aren't there. Developmental Disability Services are not available to them till age 21.

The pilot project is being developed at LPS. There are students 18-21 that could be working instead of in the school system all day long. Waverly is another pilot for this project. Students are put out in community being paid for employment. At least half of

this population is being-kept in the school program under the IEP safety net in case employment doesn't work. This is a coordinated effort to successfully place students out in the work force with a job coach. The job coach will gradually fades out.

Brenda is working with the Beatrice schools. This is a different array of students and much different communities. This takes lots of communication and collaboration.

XI. Publication Update (Sandy Ham)

Distributed were several publications:

1. Resources for the Transition Educator--intended to help communicate to the education staff VR's role in the transition process--folder includes:
 - a. Pamphlet: Planning for Work and Adult Living
 - b. Arranging Transition Services with Vocational Rehabilitation: A Guide for Educators
 - c. Nebraska School Counseling Career Development Guide: Skill for Lifelong Learning, Earning and Living
 - d. Transition Services Planner: A Guide for Students and Their Families
 - e. Letter: An Introduction to Transition Services—A Partnership with Schools
 - f. Making It Work
 - g. Transition Partnership Planning Form
 - h. Transition Report for High School (example)
 - i. Transition Services Consent and Information Release
2. The Pocket Guide to Your Job Application
3. Job Search Tips (tri-fold)
4. Three of the Consumer Service Pamphlets
 - a. Job Seeking Skills Program
 - b. Employment Warranty Program
 - c. Job Placement Program.

XII. Economic Impact Study by Wichita University (*Don Crouch*)

Don mailed out to SRC members the "Economic Impact of VR Services done by Wichita State University." It does have some interesting information. The results shows we had 1416 placements in 2005 providing direct payroll over 21 million. \$600,000 of that state sales tax revenue. There was over \$335,000 in state income tax revenues. Don thought we might use some of this information in the annual report. The council agreed feeling that some of the statistics would be valuable in the annual report. Another suggestion was to put some of this information on the VR website and the council's website.

Motion was made by Pearl Van Zandt to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mike Newman. Motion carried, meeting adjourned.